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House of Representatives

THE HONORABLE DARRELL ISSA

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS ACT

Friday, July 10, 2009

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3082, the "Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2010." This bill will fund our nation's military construction projects and veterans' benefits for Fiscal Year 2010.

While I supported this bill, and what it provides for our military and veterans, it is unfortunate the Democratic leadership in Congress refused to allow debate on many amendments including an amendment proposed by Rep. CONNIE MACK that would have reduced the labor costs of each construction project funded by this legislation.

Currently, federal construction projects which cost more than \$2,000 must follow Davis-Bacon wage requirements. The Davis-Bacon Act requires employers to pay workers at least the "locally prevailing wage," as determined by the Department of Labor.

Of the reports investigated by the Office of Inspector General, 100% of the wage surveys, used to set the "prevailing wage," contained one or more errors.

According to the Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University, Davis-Bacon wage requirements over-estimate wages, inflating construction costs by almost 10%. This amounts to \$8.6 billion taxpayer waste per year. For our military and veterans, this is billions that could have been used to update the Vietnam-era quanzi-huts still in use at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base or to fix the Post 9/11 GI bill error that will unfairly reduce California veterans' education benefits.

In this time of fiscal uncertainty, Congress must set priorities and spend wisely. Shutting out debate on an archaic measure that unnecessarily increases cost moves our nation in the wrong direction.